



## **The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Program Evaluation Tool Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Who is required to use the MDE Program Evaluation Tool?**

- a. Any school that submits a School Improvement Plan (SIP) is required to evaluate the school improvement plan and determine whether the school has met the objectives specified in school improvement plan (PA25) no matter if the school is receiving federal funds or not.
- b. Districts/PSAs not receiving federal funds are required to monitor their schools to ensure fulfillment of the State PA25 requirements, approval of all SIPs, as well as submission of Program Evaluation Tool for each school.
- c. Districts and schools receiving federal funds are required to progress monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programs funded by federal monies and examine their impact on achievement of all students, including the subgroups (Elementary and Secondary Education Act-ESEA). When such districts/schools choose a program to evaluate, they must select a program that is at least partially funded with supplemental federal or state funds.
- d. IDEA programs should adhere to guidance issued by the Office of Special Education at MDE

### **2. Why is MDE requiring Program Evaluation?**

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is requiring the completion and submission of the Program Evaluation Tool for the following reasons:

- a. Evaluation shows the impact of instruction on student achievement and whether gaps are being closed for subgroups.
- b. Program evaluation ensures that high quality planning, implementation and evaluation are part of the district and school continuous improvement process. Evaluation will improve the quality of plans and implementation of these plans with fidelity.
- c. Evaluating with fidelity will ensure ongoing engagement of multiple stakeholders (students, teachers, parents/community, and administrators).
- d. Evaluation maximizes the coordination, focus and use of local, state and federal funds to impact student learning.
- e. Evaluation provides documentation of program implementation to inform future decision-making.
- f. Formal evaluation of key initiatives is required by federal programs (ESEA) and state law (PA25).

**3. When should districts/schools start using the MDE Evaluation Tool?**

Districts/PSAs and schools should start using the MDE evaluation tool while planning for the 2014/15 school year. The tool is practical, usable and informative during the planning process for the district or school improvement plans. It will inform the school/district teams of the type of measures they need to have in place in order to plan, implement with fidelity and evaluate a strategy/program/initiative.

**4. What are districts/schools required to evaluate?**

Districts/PSAs and schools are required to submit the completed evaluation of **one** evidence-based strategy/program/initiative that would make the greatest impact on student achievement and close achievement gaps. When schools/districts choose a program to evaluate, they must select a program that is funded at least partially with one or more of the following supplemental federal or state funds (Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part D; Title II; Title III; Title VI; Title X, Section 31a). The inclusion of general funds to support the program is most appropriate; however, the program evaluation being submitted should not be solely funded with general funds.

**5. How does the district/school determine what to evaluate?**

The decision on what should be evaluated is made at the district level for district initiatives and at the school level for school initiatives. The district or school should ask the following question to make this decision: What is the most important initiative that we are undertaking to accelerate achievement and close achievement gaps for our unique student population? The decision to select the evidence-based strategy/program/initiative that would most likely make the greatest impact on student achievement should be based on the triangulation of multiple sets of data, including local or state student achievement. School and district teams are highly encouraged to coordinate their state, local and federal funds to support the program of their choice to ensure its successful implementation and, therefore, impact on students. If the district/school decides, based on achievement data, that a different initiative would make the greatest impact, the evaluation would be submitted for the newly-selected strategy/program/initiative.

**6. Does the district/school have to submit a program Evaluation Tool for each of the federal programs for which they are funded?**

No. The MDE Program Evaluation Tool is not required for each of the funding sources. Instead, schools and districts are to submit one evaluation for a program that would make the greatest impact on student achievement. For example, when a district elects to provide a summer school program, it can support it using a combination of local funds and supplemental funds such as: Title I for hiring teachers, Title II for professional development, Title III for an EL coach, and Title I, Part C for bilingual leveled books. If a district is using Title II and/or Title III to support a program implemented at a school level, the district is required to submit a district-level evaluation for that initiative if it is the focal program.

**7. Can the district submit an evaluation of the same strategy/program/initiative annually?**

Yes, as long as multiple sources of data were used to inform the decision-making process regarding which program should be the focus of the school/district efforts and state/federal resources. In fact, we expect that the major school or district initiative will likely take two or more years to fully implement with fidelity, and to actually have maximum impact on student achievement. Evaluating annually will help adjust the improvement plan and its implementation to maximize impact on student achievement.

**8. Does the district/school have to submit an evaluation of a different program each year?**

No. Districts/schools can submit an evaluation of the same program annually as long as it is the strategy/program/initiative they choose to fund due to its expected impact on student achievement.

**9. When are districts and schools required to submit an evaluation to MDE?**

Districts/schools are required to submit an evaluation of **one** initiative using the program evaluation tool **by June 30, 2015** and annually thereafter. This applies to single building districts as well. The evaluation should be submitted on the ASSIST using the Program Evaluation diagnostic.

**10. Will MDE require schools/districts to change the strategy/program/initiative after a year if there is no impact on student achievement?**

The MDE expects that districts/PSAs monitor and evaluate all aspects of program implementation (e.g. adult behavior, fidelity of implementation, compliance with fiscal state and federal requirements) on an annual basis. The MDE team understands that the planning and implementation of a strategy/ program/ initiative requires more than one year in order for school/district teams to meet the DIP/SIP objectives. The MDE requires progress-monitoring the fidelity of implementation and adjusting the activities to ensure incremental and steady impact on student achievement. Local assessments should guide and inform the implementation process. Summative assessments should inform the annual decision-making process for staying the course, making minor or significant changes. If the strategy/ program/ initiative is not yielding results by the third year of implementation despite adjustments in the activities and the monitoring process of such adjustments, the MDE will recommend that school and district teams rethink the appropriateness of the program as the focus of the improvement plan.